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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 273. APRIL, 1930.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

" Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? "
—I Cor. 3 : 16.

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Editorial.

The Naval Conference.

In the February issue we referred to the " successful " terminations of previous disarmament conferences and hinted that the present naval conference might terminate in the same manner. This we did at a time when practically all the newspapers were prominently displaying optimistic headlines. Unfortunately our fears have proved to be well grounded. The outlook at present is more gloomy than when the conference opened. Up to the present the outstanding feature of the conference is the intensifying of a rivalry hitherto only latent, namely that between France and Italy. In other words this conference for peace has fanned into a flame the smouldering embers of militarism. Too much should not be expected from an agreement between Britain, America and Japan even if this is reached. Such an agreement will obviously be subject to revision in the event of France and Italy translating their paper programmes into actual ships of war. And so the clock has been put back, but not far enough. It should be put back nineteen centuries to the time of the Prince of Peace. We have yet to try on a large scale, His methods of settling disputes.

* *

Russia.

We have hitherto refrained from commenting on the religious persecution in Russia owing to the difficulty of obtaining authentic details. So far as we can judge the Soviet attack on religion proceeds much as it has done for many years namely, by propaganda, by the teaching of atheism and by restrictions on religious instruction. This is bad enough and warrants a strong protest from all Christian nations but such protests should be carefully worded. Some we have seen are based on unsupported tales of atrocities while others may reasonably be suspected of confusing political aim with religious protest. Undoubtedly there is persecution but it is not so intense and widespread as we are led to believe. For instance Mr. Arnold Bennett who is certainly not pro-Russian, testified to the wonderful church services he had witnessed in Russia during the summer months of last year. Again, about a month ago a B.U.P. representative favourably described the church service which he attended in Moscow, where he said that 1,500 out of 1,600 churches were holding services on that day.

Yet again we have an official statement, which has yet to be contradicted, that " according to official figures there are at present in Soviet Russia no less than 46,500 churches and that tens of millions of Soviet citizens are freely exercising their right to worship." These facts and figures should make us pause before joining in the wholesale and intemperate denunciations of Russia.

By all means let us protest against religious persecution not only in Russia but everywhere, but let us beware of having our deep-seated religious feelings exploited in the interests of sects and parties. In this connection we were pleased to note that the recent protest of the Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Church was very carefully and temperately worded.

* *

Slavery.

Five years ago two British statesmen, Sir Austin Chamberlain and Lord Cecil took a

prominent part in inducing the League of Nations to draw up an anti-slavery convention. At the present time there are twenty-five states bound by this convention to do all in their power to abolish slavery. Yet we are told, on the authority of Lord Cecil and Lady Simon that there are still five million slaves in the world. This is a staggering statement. To know that there are over two million human beings in China and a similar number in Abyssinia, continually being bought and sold as merchandise, is most disquieting especially when it is realised that Britain is far from being blameless in the matter. We certainly cannot be proud of the fact that in the British colony of Hong-Kong the system of child slavery still persists. While we are protesting against religious persecution in Russia we might at the same time protest with equal vehemence against civil persecution elsewhere. If we are inclined to regard slavery as a peculiarly heathen custom we might remember that the custom was defended for centuries by Christians on Scriptural grounds. In this connection we note that a local evangelical has stated that all our troubles are due to the fact that "we go to other sources than the Bible for information." It would have been a calamity for millions of slaves if we had not gone to sources other than the Bible for guidance on the question of slavery. Fortunately for humanity it was realised that on the question of slavery "The Lord had yet more light and truth to break forth from His word" and slavery was,—we nearly said "abolished" but the above facts will not allow.

* *

Animal Cruelty.

All humanitarians will sincerely hope that the bill for the abolition of stag-hunting now before the Imperial Parliament, will become law in the very near future. That interested parties should be strongly opposed to the bill is natural, but to suppose that their arguments have any weight is an insult to enlightened intelligence.

We are told that stag-hunting gives employment and excitement to a considerable number of people. Exactly the same could be said of bear-baiting and bull-fighting, but there is no suggestion that on these grounds we should revive the former and introduce the latter. Lord Bayford tells us that "even from the deer's point of view there is much to be said in favour of stag-hunting." One wishes it were possible for Lord Bayford to experience the feelings of a terrified and exhausted deer just before its agonizing death, in order to realise exactly how much can be said "from the deer's point of view." If the thinning out of deer is necessary it should be done by humane methods and not by savage and barbaric methods that are a disgrace to Christian civilisation.

Surely the question of love and justice to animals has been too long neglected by the Christian Church. True we are not carrying out the literal teaching of the Bible by actively concerning ourselves with this question, but as in the case of the abolition of slavery, we think it humane, not to say Christian, to "go to sources other than the Bible"—in this case, those finer, humanitarian feelings with which the Creator has endowed us.

* *

The Sermon's Object.

Whether the sermon should instruct or inspire or both, whether it should awaken the intellect or arouse the religious emotions or both, will always be extremely controversial questions, According to Professor Corkey, "the sermon, when it serves its purpose, is not so much a detailed discussion of any particular social policy so much as a consideration of some phase of everyday life in the light of God." This statement was made in a recent "conversational sermon" (a sermon delivered by two preachers with the "conversation" carefully prepared beforehand) on the subject: "Church and Politics." "It is for this reason" continued the speaker, "that I think preachers do well when in the house of God on the Lord's Day to eschew referencs to politics or social reform that are keenly debatable."

No doubt this point of view can be ably defended on religious grounds, but it will hardly be accepted by the ministers of our Liberal Religious Faith who, acting according to the light that is in them, do not hesitate to deal with all phases of life, even the "keenly debatable" phases, in the light of God. To avoid a subject simply because it is controversial or keenly debatable savours of a "safety first" policy and this should surely be the last policy for a minister of religion. It is safe to say that if Christ had chosen his words with an eye on

"safety first" there would have been no Christian Religion.

However, we hesitate to lay down any rules on a matter which has so many legitimate points of view. If Professor Corkey is protesting against politics as such, being brought into the pulpit we are with him. However if he is for the exclusion of controversial and keenly debatable subjects simply because they are such (for instance drink, gambling, animal cruelty—all debatable subjects) then we must disagree. However we have perhaps placed Professor Corkey in a false position ?

Random Notes.

"By Quiet Observer."

Many who study the Annual Report of our Church must often wonder why only nine congregations in the Remonstrant Synod participate in their Sustentation Fund.

In 1869, the Irish Church Act became law, which meant, that State aid to various religious sects would be discontinued, and so our church with others lost a very large sum, amounting in our case to almost £70 per annum paid each minister.

Orthodox church members started to raise funds to replace this annual grant, but unfortunately the members of our denomination could not agree on a general scheme, and lost so much time, that when the Remonstrant Synod alone decided to carry out a scheme, the interest of many of our lay members had cooled. However in 1872 after a number of meetings had been held and various schemes considered, nine congregations agreed on forming a fund whereby in payment, at the rate of 4/- per stipend payer to fund, and a certain minimum income to minister, each congregation would participate.

Eight congregations raised a donation of £4,500 towards the fund. Banbridge alone gave £2,400 of this, and each pledged an annual subscription of from £10 to £30; other congregations contributed later, but with the exception of Warrenpoint and Moira, who ceased to contribute there has been no change in list of participants since 1872. Dunmurry while subscribing regularly did not participate for a number of years.

Newry and Dromore subscribed for a few years, and if they had continued the Synod would have been entitled to the principal of the Dunbar Fund, a gift of Miss Dunbar, Banbridge, amounting to £2,000. This fund is managed by Trustees selected by Banbridge congregation and if the Synod Fund had the support of two thirds of the congregations in Synod, the £2,000 would have been transferred to the Fund. The alternative use was that the interest should be divided among not less than four or more than eight deserving weak congregations in connexion with the Remonstrant Synod.

The General Sustentation Fund of the Non-Subscribing Church was started in October, 1910. The first disbursement of his fund was made to 28 ministers in July, 1914, of £9, since then the fund has gradually increased principally by generous bequests until now the yearly disbursement is about £40; may it continue increasing until at least £50 can be disbursed

Nearly fifty years ago, Rev. Alex. Gordon edited a very interesting magazine "The Disciple." Unfortunately it did not get the support it deserved. A fore-runner of the N.S.P., it gave very interesting news of our churches here and elsewhere. Perhaps some of our readers can let me know how long it was published and if any of our church libraries have a complete set.

I had hoped to have heard of some more to celebrate the Remonstrant Synod centenary in May; surely our churches are not going to miss this opportunity of awakening public interest in our church. If the Synod as a whole do not dare to act, surely individual ministers will.

Under the settlement of new ministers in Clough, Crumlin and Moneyrea, these congregations are taking renewed interest in their church work.

York Street, labouring under a handicap is doing well, indeed generally speaking our church members are loyally supporting their ministers in various church activities.

THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN.

An attempt is being made to acquire a full set of "The Bible Christian." If this can be obtained it means that much historical data of our Church will be available in compact form. Will readers who possess old, unwanted copies, please forward same to the editor ?

Good Citizenship.

By the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.

I.—Christianity and the State.

The Christian religion sets a very high value on Government and Law. Jesus taught us to render to the State the obligations and loyalty which are due. And St Paul in the Romans writes: "The existing authorities have been constituted by God; the magistrate is God's servant for your benefit."—(Dr. Moffatt's translation). In his view the State and Government are a divine institution as well as the Church itself.

Civil authority and order are necessary to our human life. The individual cannot live or achieve his ends without them. If they ceased chaos and disorder would ensue, civilised life would become impossible with all its gifts to us, Christianity itself with its gospel would perish.

Church and State are the two great divine institutions. They work hand in hand for the full development of human personality which is the true end of life and their one justification is in their fulfilment of that supremely sacred duty. That makes both of them sacred. Hence our duties to our city, our country, to the League of Nations, and the whole commonwealth of man must be held in the highest regard as our offering to God.

Our citizenship is part of our Christian religion and no man can be a good christian who is not a good citizen. The "saved man" who is other-worldly in the sense that he declines to have anything to do with the affairs of city or state, as being of this world is not a saved man but only the fraction of a man. True piety has to express itself in true patriotism, i.e., in service of the commonweal in whatever sphere we are called, the home, daily business, and citizenship.

Presbyterianism has never cut itself off from civic life and its functions. Its original founders, Calvin and Knox, both exalted their citizenship as they did their church. They spent themselves, the one at Geneva and the other at Edinburgh, for the good government of city and state.

II.—Plato on Citizenship.

The state is not an artificial thing or accident added to individual life. It is constitutive of the latter and a necessity to it above the animal level. Plato, the greatest of thinkers, showed this long ago in that wonderful book: "The Republic," where he traced the rise and growth of the community as necessarily and naturally involved in the development of all human life and personality, its fundamental principle being that of the division of labour and the co-operation based on it.

Hence his reverence for the Ideal State, to outline which was the greatest work of his genius. This ideal state was necessary to create the ideal man or citizen and give him scope for his character and life. It was the city in which justice is realised and justice for Plato meant an order so organised that every class and every man does his proper work properly, i.e., the work he is fitted by character and ability to do, and which he does for the good of the whole and the benefit of all. The natural head and director of it would be the philosopher, the man who "contemplates all time and existence" and thus has insight into the good, the divine purpose of history, the law of things, Reality. His philosopher is a saint, in the sense that in him Reason is on the throne, private passions and appetites and ends have been subdued. He has conquered the world. The universal and eternal Good is his one object and pursuit.

The remarkable Platonic scheme of education from childhood to maturity, was designed to produce the good citizen, the elements of whose soul were rightly developed and trained so that he would perform the duties of the sphere into which he was called, cleansed of selfish motives, and for the sake of the commonwealth. The dominating aim of Plato is to create in the soul and in society that harmonious justice which consists in being a good and faithful servant, the very doctrine of Jesus Christ. The measure of a man is the quality and magnitude of his service.

III.—Democracy and Rule.

To-day we require to preserve or recover this high concept of our city, state, and government that we may treat them as sacred and keep the public service free of self-interest and corruption. We must not abuse the instruments or pervert to our own purposes the methods of Democracy. The well-being of our town or city must be enthroned supreme above the advantage of class, party, faction, or individual. And the secret of true demicracy lies not in plebiscites or the rule of all, but in the selection of the wisest and best to be our

rulers. Plato knew that it would be very difficult to get men to undertake the duty who were above the attraction of office, power, popularity or wealth, because they would incur the abuse and hatred of meaner men and of the mob, but until a city or state creates that type of citizen and gets him into office the community will be doomed to suffer from the illusions, falsehoods, and flatteries of men who have no vision of the Holy City, no knowledge of its laws, no insight into the Good, on which God has laid the foundations of the world.

Young People's League,

TO OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

II.

O ye young people of little faith! or is it of great caution? Perhaps I am in too great a hurry, and you need a little more time to think over the matter. Well, if that be so, please make up your minds soon and join up. As we said in our first article (see March number of this magazine) the first step is to give me your names. I believe that some of you are waiting for others to join first; waiting to see what the new move is all about—what it is going to do. If that is so, you misunderstand. You are the young people! Join up at the start and help to decide its policy—help to decide what is to be done. Be among those who will have a first say in the matter as to what the organisation is to do, and how, eventually, it is to function.

My postbag has been very light up till now. Almost straight away I received a gracious letter from a lady in Belfast. She sends us a book of Services used by young people across the water, which we may find very useful. But she says she is too old to join herself, though she wishes you every success in your movement. That "too old" sets me wondering how we ought to compute age. Is the calendar the sole criterion. Who was it said—

"Count time by heart throbs
Not by figures on the dial."

Just now, and on your behalf, I thank this correspondent, for her kindly wishes. Then one lady approached me and said that thirty-six was a ridiculous age to stop at. Perhaps there is a wish among many that we had had a Young People's League in our church years ago.

I have received two names from Ballyclare, and two from Dromore. I thank them for their promptness, and when the list is made out they will of course appear at the top. I approached the young people of my own particular church of Banbridge, and asked them if they intended joining. "Of course," they said. But then, you see I had to ask them first, and I have six names from here. This gives me an idea. Perhaps you will ask your ministers to send me your names, especially where you have a Guild or Society already formed in your particular church. Or the Secretaries of these bodies might send on a list. But of course no names must be sent forward without the consent of those named.

Now you young people. Rally! I am anxious to get that list of two hundred—I want to get to buisness. I had expected really, more than names, I thought I would have been almost deluged with letters of advice and suggestions. Write at once to—

P. Godding,
The Manse,
Banbridge.

In Presence of the Unutterable Majesty of the All in All, we will deny nothing; But, alas, equally we can assert nothing. Or only this, that it is all unutterable, inconceivable, inexplicable by us; unknown to us, but conceivably not unknowable. To assert that it is unknown to us is to acknowledge our human weakness; to assert that it is absolutely unknowable is to assert something about that of which we say we know nothing When we say that we cannot conceive it, or explain it, or utter it, we state only that which is within our consciousness *We* cannot solve the mystery. We shrink from asserting that there is no mystery to solve; that it can never be solved at all. We deny nothing, and we assert nothing.—The Creed of a Layman, by FREDERIC HARRISON.

N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.

Phone—Malone 378.

Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.

Women's League.

Visit of MRS. A. B. WOODHOUSE, of Manchester, to Northern Ireland.

By Mrs. E. M. Jackson.

When the Committee of the Ulster District League heard that the Belfast Domestic Mission had invited Mrs. A. B. Woodhouse, of Manchester to preach the Annual Sermons on behalf of the Mission, there was no delay in arranging a series of meetings under the auspices of the Women's League. The first was at Dromore on Wednesday, March 12th, when members from Banbridge and Newry joined forces with the Dromore members to do honour to Mrs. Woodhouse, who lectured for an hour on her visit to the people of the Brahmo Samaj in India. Illustrating her talk with photographs of her own taking, ornaments and native dresses and other things peculiar to the country, Mrs. Woodhouse held her audience spellbound. Mrs. A. Davison, president of the Dromore Branch, presided at the meeting.

On Thursday, March 13th, the Annual Meeting of the District League took place in Rosemary Hall, Elmwood Avenue. A service was conducted by Mrs. Woodhouse in All Souls' Church, and later Mrs. Woodhouse spoke of her experiences in Palestine and the Holy Land, again making her word-pictures live with examples of embroidery, pottery, jewels, etc. Over 90 members were present from Ballyclare, Ballycarry, Comber, Cairncastle, Moneyrea, Larne and the four Belfast branches.

In the evening a Public Meeting was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, the Moderator, Rev. J. G. Davies, of Comber, in the chair. Mrs. Woodhouse gave a lantern lecture on her visit to India in connection with the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj. Mr. George Hill exhibited the slides with his accustomed ability. For an hour and a half Mrs. Woodhouse spoke without a note, of her experiences during her four months stay in India from October 1928, to February 1929. The slides were all made from photographs of her own taking, and many were of exceptional beauty, showing great skill in arrangement and lighting. As well as scenes familiar to all travellers in India, such as the Taj Mahal and the Victory Gate at Lucknow, there were photos of the members of the Delegation with their Indian hosts and groups of the Khasi Hills' Unitarians.

Such names as Dr. Hem Chandra Sarkar, President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj; Mrs. Sarkar, founder of the Maharini Girls' School, at Darjeeling; Messrs. Sergeant, Kongro and Rajoohoy, leaders of the Unitarians in the Khasi Hills; Mrs. Suhtankar, daughter of the Rev. J. W. Bishop, and her husband, Dr. Suhtankar, Director of Education for the State of Indore, and their beautiful daughter; Dr. Chitnis, of Bombay, who with Dr. Suhtankar was formerly a student at Manchester College, Oxford; Mrs. Nellenhar, who organised the Parliament of Religions in Calcutta, with the Lord Chief Justice in the chair, when representatives of Hindus, Moslems, Parsees, Zoroastians, Orthodox Christians and Unitarians gave accounts of their own religions, and where the Unitarian belief as presented by the lecturer received pride of place; and the Maharajah of Pithapuram, who is a generous supporter of the Brahmo Samaj Hospital, College and Orphanage, and who placed his bungalow at the disposal of the delegation; such names will ever live in the memory of the fortunate people who had this wonderful experience. But the picture that will perhaps remain longest is that of the struggling band of Unitarians in the very wet but beautiful Khasi Hills, who are praying for help and guidance from their British brethren in the Faith.

A special fund has been opened by the General Assembly and a minister has already been appointed to visit the Brahmo Samaj and the Khasi Hills Unitarians. Mrs. Woodhouse very generously donated her fee from the Belfast Domestic Mission to start a subscription list in Ulster and Miss Hutton has also promised a handsome donation. Mrs. E R. Jackson, Myrtlebank, Ravenhill Road, is willing to receive further contributions on behalf of the General Assembly; the list of subscribers will be printed in the next issue of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Magazine.

Belfast Domestic Mission.

The Annual Sermons were preached on Sunday, March 16th, by Mrs. Woodhouse, in the morning at the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, and in the evening at All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, At each service the resident ministers, Rev. R. N. Cross, M.A., and Rev. S. P Whitehouse, read the lessons.

In both her addresses Mrs Woodhouse stressed the need to rise above the materia things of life and strive for the eterna.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

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values. Taking for her text in the morning the 33rd verse of the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew, Mrs Woodhouse showed how this vital message of Jesus is shared by orthodox Christians and how we could co-operate with them in a common aim, the betterment of world conditions. A true and living faith in God should be the keynote of our lives, a faith in the goodness of God and the wisdom of the Universe. In the evening, from the 38th verse of the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, Mrs. Woodhouse demonstrated that even if material gifts were beyond the means of most people, each and everyone could give service friendship, loyalty and sympathy in the family, the church and in the field of welfare work.

At the Annual Meeting of the Mission held in the Central Hall on Monday, March 17th, Mrs. Woodhouse gave a detailed account of the work of the Collyhurst Recreation Club in Manchester, with which she had been connected for over 40 years. With its Girls' Club, Boys' Clubs, Nursery Schools, Mothers' Meetings, Thrift Clubs, Penny Bank (open to the neighbourhood), Holiday Homes and Soup Kitchens, this Club caters for all ages and strives to put before its members a high ideal, and provides an environment wider and more congenial than would be otherwise possible in the crowded working-class neighbourhood with its teeming multitudes.

Mr. John Wilkinson, President of the Belfast Chapter of the Laymen's League was in the chair. Miss Hutton moved and Miss A. Montgomery seconded the hearty votes of thanks to Mrs Woodhouse.

The Committee's report was read by the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. E. M. Jackson, the Financial Statement presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. Mackenzie, and the Missionary Report by Mr. N. Kirkham.

The Committee's Report made special reference to the increasing interest shown by the different branches of the Women's League and members of the Needlework Guild, but pleaded for more interest to be shown by churches outside the city.

The Financial Statement showed that the small sum of £41 14s. 6d. was subscribed by members of our churches and were it not for the generosity of bygone Unitarians the Mission might close its doors.

The Chairman stressed this point and pleaded for trebled subscriptions before another annual meeting.

Mr. J. H. Gilliland, in moving the vote of thanks to Mr. Kirkham, made reference to the daily trials which beset the Missionary and the need for sympathy and help on the part of those outside.

Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, when proposing the vote of thanks to the voluntary workers at the Mission, made special reference to the work of the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. E. M. Jackson, and to that of the leader of the Social Service Girls Clubs, Miss Montgomery. The clubs have gained many honours in the recent Dancing, Musical and Club Union competitions.

Mrs. Leith kindly acted as accompanist and the Rev. R. N. Cross led the devotions.

Man Begins to Wonder Why?

It was not long after man had risen from his first low state, and the chief wants of his body were supplied, that he would begin to act the man still more by thinking, then would hear some voice within telling him that eating and drinking were not the chief ends for which life had been given him.

He saw around him the world with its great silent hills and green valleys; its rugged ridges of purple tinted mountains and miles of barren flat; its trees and fragrant flowers; the graceful forms of man, the soaring bird, the swift deer and kingly lion; the big, ungainly-shaped mammoth; the wide scene beaming with the colours which came forth at the bidding touch of sunlight, or bathed in the shadows cast by passing clouds. He saw the sun rise and travel to the west carrying the light away; the moon at regular times growing from sickle-shape to full round orb; then each night the stars few or many bursting out like sparks struck off the wheels of the Sun-God's chariot, or like the glittering sprays of water cast by a ship as she ploughs the sea.

His ears listened to the different sounds of Nature; the music of the flowing river; the roar of the never silent sea; the rustle of the leaves as they were swept by the unseen fingers of the breeze; the patter of the rain as it dropped from the great black clouds; the rumble of the thunder as it followed the spear-like flashes of light sent from the rolling clouds; these and a

hundred other sounds, now harsh, now sweet, made him ask, "What does it all mean? Where and what am I? Whence came I? Whence came all that I see and hear and touch?"

Man's first feeling was one of simple wonder; his second feeling the wish to find out the cause of things, what it was that made them as they were. All around him was Nature, great, mighty, beautiful; was it not all alive, for did it not all move? He knew that he himself moved or stood still as he chose, that his choice was ruled by certain reasons, and that only when he willed to do anything was it done. Something within governed all that he did. Nature was not still; the river flowed, the clouds drifted, the leaves trembled, the earth shook; sun, moon, stars stayed not: these, then, must be moved by something within them.

Thus began a belief in spirits dwelling in everything; in sun, tree, waterfall, flame, beast, bird, and serpent.

EDWARD CLODD.

Charlotte Bronte's Creed.

Life appear to me to be too short to be spent in nursing animosity or registering wrongs. We are one and all burdened with faults in this world, but the time will come when, I trust we shall put them off our corruptible bodies; when debasement and sin will fall from us and only the spark will remain, the impalpable principle of life and thought, pure as when it left the Creator to inspire the creature. Whence it came, it will return, perhaps to pass through gradations of glory.

It is a creed in which I delight, to which I cling. It makes Eternity a rest, a home; not a terror and an abyss. With this creed revenge never worries my heart, degradation never too deeply disgusts me, injustice never crushes me too low. I live in calm, looking to the end.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

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BELFAST.

— The Unitarian and —
Free Christian Laymen's League

BELFAST CHAPTER

meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,

35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.,

MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon Sec.

19 Lime Street. Belfast.

The Family Pew.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Fashions change with the times. There are localities where Sunday observance seems to be a thing of the past; there are still a few places where the quiet and sanctity of the Sabbath rests like a benediction, and at the summons of the bell, from various homes, young and old wend their way to the House of God.

Preaching, certainly holds an important place in public worship. Many esteem it the principal thing, and all else subsidiary to it. Others regard it as only having an equal place with praise and prayer and the reading of scripture, and that the main purpose of a church is not the teaching of doctrine, orthodox or heterodox, but the worship of Almighty God.

Has it never come with a feeling of awe, to a minister, the deep responsibility of the solemn hour as he faces a congregation! Men who have a week's work behind them, glad to have the day of rest, seeking for new inspiration and courage; women, whose work is never done,—but, theirs is the house beautiful, and the children nicely dressed for morning school and service, betoken love blended with labour? "Let us pray." The words have passed like a thrill over the congregation. More than beautiful phrase has been the deep sincerity and sense of reality in and through the spoken word.

Has the power in the sacrament, never been manifested, as silently from hand to hand the sacred elements were passed, and over an old wrinkled face, the lines of which told of care and struggle, tears fell, in the quiet rapture of blessed communion?

In later years, when after travel far and wide, the old pew is seen once more, there's no regret for hours shining like gems in memory.

The time is one of rush and excitement. The mastery of mind makes for argument and combativeness, emotions are considered weaknesses, and a generation is growing up sceptical and cynical, and old church members are saying: "People when they get to our way of thinking, don't want churches."

The child-heart, however, responds to the Jesus that loved little children. Why, with heedless ruthlessness, brush away the budding flowers of faith and hope, by tactless utterance!

"I have a tender plant called reverence," said Oliver Wendell Holmes, "and once a week, I water it, by going to church."

Family pew and family hearth are linked, and together they make "Home."

ULLIN.

I Am that—

(*From the Literature of ancient Ireland*).

I am the wind that bloweth upon the sea;
I am the wave upon great waters;
I am the sound of the sea;
I am a ray of the sun;
I am the finest of plants;
I am a lake in the plain;
I am the craft of the artificer;
I am the eagle on the rock;
I am the bull of seven battles;
I am the spear-point that giveth battle;
I am the strong wild boar,
I am the lion for courage;
I am a salmon in the water;
I am the word of knowledge;
I am the God that creates in the heart of man the fire of thought.
Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountains, if not I?
Who telleth the ages of the moon if not I?
Who showeth the place where the sun goes to rest, if not I?

—*From the poet Amergin. These lines are probably a fragment of a Druid philosophical liturgy.*

The Inquirer and Christian Life.

With which is incorporated The Unitarian Herald.

A Journal of Free Religious Fellowship and Organ of Unitarian Christianity.

It contains Notes of Current Events, Reviews of Books, Articles and Discussions of Special Interest to all adherents of the Liberal Movement in Religion and Social Ethics, Reports of Meetings. Denominational and General News of Unitarian and Kindred Churches.

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The Lost Power of the Church.

The Church has lost the great power it once undoubtedly had and it no longer attracts. The habit of church-going is dying out and the majority of people in the British Isles no longer look with favour on public worship.

We are living in the age of the motor car, of sport, of the cinema, the theatre, the music hall, the ball room—an age in which the church is unable to hold its own with other spheres of human activity and interest.

It must be admitted that considering its opportunities, the church has failed lamentably. In spite of huge costly buildings, large endowments and specially trained men, the church touches only the fringe of the great masses of the people.

It is estimated that in Great Britain and Northern Ireland alone the annual income of the church is over £25 million and that there are over 25 000 priests and clergymen devoting their lives to religion. Yet in spite of this tremendous outpouring of money, energy and time the churches are very poorly attended.

Side by side with this we have long queues outside our cinemas, theatres and music halls while huge crowds throng our race courses and football grounds.

No thinking man or woman can reflect seriously upon these facts without some apprehension regarding the moral and spiritual well-being of future generations.

The majority of people either escape the influence of the church altogether or else feel its influence only on special occasions such as birth, marriage and death.

It is futile to argue that the fault lies wholly with men and women, who are less religious than they used to be. Religious experience is still there but it lies dormant, waiting to be roused into activity. There is the same longing for some outward expression of that deep-seated ineradicable spiritual part of human nature, the same need to think that the universe has a purpose and that life is fundamentally worth while, the same striving of the human soul for communication with the Great Soul of the universe, the same desire of the human spirit to return from whence it came, but these divine hopes and aspirations are not brought into direct contact with the church and its activities.

And what is more to the point, they never will be until the church definitely throws overboard all the beliefs, superstitions and magical practices that are diametrically opposed to modern knowledge of man and the universe in which he lives.

Enlightened men and women of to-day who have had their minds broadened by education unknown to their forefathers, who have come into contact with modern literature and who have had their minds stimulated by writers like Shaw, Wells, Galsworthy and other intellectual giants must of necessity revolt at the fifteen-centuries-old dogmatic teaching of the church.

What the church as a whole has not yet realised is that, any religion built upon miracle is as a house built upon the sand. The flowing tide of science and philosophy to say nothing of the ever-widening streams of popular education, will soon bring it toppling to the earth.

The alternative to the present unsatisfying traditional religion is not no religion at all, but a better religion that satisfies man's inquiring mind as well as his aspiring soul, that appeals to the head as well as to the heart and that satisfies the reason as well as stimulates the emotions.

Traditional church teaching is completely out of harmony with the expanding thought and enlightened conscience of all educated men and women. The time has come for the majority of orthodox creeds, dogmas and confessions to be placed in theological museums where they can be admired as interesting relics of a pre-scientific age.

If the church wishes to regain its lost power it must give a lead to enlightened public opinion and not be content to lag a few centuries behind it.

There need be no fear that the revolution will dethrone fundamental and valuable religious truths.

The Great Invisible Power we call God will be comprehended more clearly when we have scrapped most of the belittling traditional creeds and dogmas about Him.

The greatest of all religious teachers we call Jesus will be understood all the better when we have cleared away all the worn-out, reason-violating theories about Him.

Human nature will be understood all the better when it is regarded as rising from a lowly state instead of being regarded as falling from a mythical perfect state in a mythical golden age.

Religion will not suffer by the revolution. Men and women of this present age, as of all ages, are incurably religious. They cannot help it; the Creator has made them that way. The human soul still flows in the direction of the Great Soul, as the river flows to the ocean. S.P.W.

Goads.

"*The words of the wise are as goads.*"
ECCLESIASTES XII, 11.

"When they cast thee down, thou shalt say, There is lifting up."—*Job XXII*, 29.

* *

"Be lamps unto yourselves. Work out your salvation with diligence."—*Buddha.*

* *

"Religion . . . the doing of all good, and for its sake the suffering of all evil."
—*Emerson.*

* *

"The greatest conquerors are those who overcome their enemies without strife."
—*Lao Tse.*

* *

"Your enjoyment of the world is never right till every morning you awake in heaven." —*Thomas Traherne.*

* *

"O son! do not expect thy wages from Umar, when thou art at work in the house of Zaid." —*Sadi.*

* *

"It is not necessary to be a Christian to appreciate the beauty and significance of the life of Christ." —*Thoreau.*

* *

"Our most important duties are positive. It is not enough not to do harm; we must do good to our brothers." —*Mazzini.*

Reports.

First Church Branch, Women's League.—At the weekly meeting on March 5th, of this branch, a very interesting address was given by Miss M'Neill, on the "Arelian Nursery School." This school is carried on in a small hall on Donegall Road, and the work is done almost entirely by voluntary assistants. The object of the school is to take care of and teach young children of working mothers. Miss M'Neill explained the working and daily routine, and told how the children are taught habits of order, and personal cleanliness, which must be of great value to them in their home life.

At the conslusion of Miss M'Neill's address, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to her, and much appreciation was expressed of the good work being done by her and her friends, who are all old pupils of Richmond Lodge School.

* *

Ballycarry.—The first Annual Service of the Ballycarry branch of the Unitarian Women's League was held on Sunday evening, February 17th. The preacher for the occasion was Mrs. Ewbank of Mountpottinger, who delivered a very appropriate discourse which was thoroughly enjoyed by a large congregation of men and women. The proceedings opened by the singing of the League hymn. The choir rendered a special anthem. Mr. Campbell of Whitehead, officiated at the Carnegie organ. Tea was served by the League members in the schoolroom adjoining, to visitors from neighbouring branches.

* *

Ballyclare Branch Unitarian Women's League.—This branch held its second annual meeting on Wednesday, 12th February. Before the business of the meeting, regret was expressed at the loss the branch has sustained by the death of Miss Evans, a loyal member and a conscientious worker. She will long be missed. The Treasurer (Miss Hogarth), read the Statement of Accounts. A "Daffodil Tea," held in April and a "Whist Drive," in October enabled us to hand £30 to the Church Treasurer to help with improvements undertaken by the Committee of the church. Miss Hogarth was accorded a hearty vote of thanks on her ability as a Treasurer, and her Aberdonian gifts as a holder for the balance of her accounts is still on the right side. In an impromptu monologue given in her own inimitable style, we realised yet once again that "Finance" is not her only forte. The Secretary (Miss O'Neill) was also thanked for her many duties always carried out so cheerfully and willingly. A vote of thanks to the President, the unanimous re-election of the three officials, and the singing of the League hymn (Mrs. Moore at the piano) concluded one of the pleasantest meetings this Branch has held.

Clough.—The annual Prize giving to Sunday School scholars and the Congregational party took place in the Presbyterian Lecture Hall, on Tuesday evening, 11th March. The Rev. James Shaw Brown presided, and expressed appreciation of the work of Miss Mollie Hay in conducting the Sunday School throughout the year. Mrs. Shaw Brown afterwards presented the prizes and medals to the scholars. A concert party from Brian Street, Downpatrick, under the leadership of Mr. Joseph Newman, contributed greatly to the enjoyment of the evening, as follows :—Pianoforte solo, Miss Marie Henry; "Mynheer and his little Dutch Lady," Misses Dorcas and Annie Hughes; violin solo, Mr. Gilbert; "Love's old song," Mr. Newman; "Oh! dear, what can the matter be?" Miss Betty Henry; humorous songs, Mr. H. W. Kelly; Japanese duet, the Misses Hughes; "Little Brown Jug," Miss Betty Henry; pianoforte solo, Miss Marie Henry. The following young people of Clough Sunday School also contributed to the programme :—Misses Mollie Hay and Vera Nelson, an amusing dialogue entitled, "The Home Girl and the Gadabout Girl"; songs by Miss Madge Kirkpatrick and Miss E. Maffett; recitations by Miss M. Donnan, and Masters D. Maffett and J. Donnan. At the close Mr. Anthony Donnan proposed, and Mr. Edward Shaw seconded, votes of thanks to the Minister and Kirk Session of Clough Presbyterian Church, for the generous use of the Lecture Hall; and to all those who had contributed to the programme, and especially to the Downpatrick friends, which were enthusiastically given. A most enjoyable evening was concluded by singing the National Anthem.

Holywood.—A very enjoyable social meeting of the congregation was held on Thursday evening March 6th. There was a good attendance, and after tea an excellent programme of music dances and recitations was provided in which the following took part: Misses Betty and Molly Patterson, Eileen Miller and Peggy Shannon and Messrs. W. J. Harvey, James Shannon, jun. Hugh Shannon jun. and Bell. This was followed by some keenly contested competitions. The local branch of the Women's League held a very successful opening meeting on Monday, March 10th. There was a very creditable attendance of members who greatly appreciated an address by Mrs. J. H. Ewbank of Mountpottinger, who was cordially thanked on the motion of Mrs. Ronald Williams, seconded by Mrs. R. Steele. The new branch promises well. The Hon. Secretary is Mrs. F. A. Robinson, and the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. James Shannon, jun.

Mountpottinger.—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held on Wednesday, March 19th, when Mr. James Orr occupied the chair. Considering the wintry conditions there was a moderate attendance. The Church Committee's report showed that the church has been actively carried on during the past 12 months and the financial statement proved that the position from this standpoint was no worse than the previous year. The Chairman intimated that after a period of over 20 years tenure of the position, Dr. R. J. Munn has asked to be relieved of the position of Hon Secretary. Mr. H. B. M'Cullough was appointed in his stead. The following were re-elected to the various offices :—Church Treasurer—Mr. E. R. Jackson; Sunday School Treasurer—Mr. L. Watters; Choir Treasurer—Mr. W. W. Wilson; Warden of the Fabric—Mr. H. Beattie; Magazine Secretary—Miss B. M'Minn; Hon. Auditors—Messrs. J. Orr and H. Thomas. Messrs. James Johnston and E. Mitchell were appointed as Envelope Secretaries for Free Will Offerings. The Church Committee was re-elected, giving Mr. M'Cullough's seat thereon to Dr. Munn After the business meeting was over tea was served and a musical programme followed towards which part songs were rendered by the choir, whilst Mrs. John Allen and Miss Elva Orr contributed solos for which each was encored. Mr. H. Shepherd presided at the piano in his usual accomplished style.

Mountpottinger Branch Women's League. On Monday, March 3rd, the Women's League held a "Kitchen Sale." Mrs. Ewbank presided and had arranged an enjoyable programme to follow the Sale. The artistes taking part were, Mrs. John Allen, Mrs. Patton, Miss Elva Orr, Miss Evelyn Beattie, Miss Violet Martin and Mr. Lewis Walters. Miss Ashworth, A.I.C.M., very kindly acted as accompanist, and also rendered a very pleasing pianoforte solo.

All members showed their practical interest in the evening's gathering which was very entertaining, and the kind help of each member resulted in a financial success.

Newry.—The Annual Sunday School Party and Prize distribution was held in the Schoolroom of the Church on Wednesday evening, February 12th, when a large com-

pany of scholars, parents and friends were present. Prizes for regular attendance at Sunday school were distributed by Mrs. Henning, and Mr. C. Warnock, Superintendent of the Sunday School, briefly addressed the children and urged them to make an effort to give full attendance. Prizes were also given to the members of the League of Loyalty who had regularly attended the services each week. The Rev. G. J. Slipper presided and thanked the teachers for their valued services, also Mrs. Henning for her kindness in presenting the prizes and to all those who had helped in the work. Games were resumed and at 9-30 a very enjoyable evening was brought to a close with the Minister pronouncing the Benediction. Fruit and cakes were given to all on leaving.

Obituary.

Miss Margaret Donnan.

The church here regrets to record the passing of a respected and loyal member. Through a long life of helpful service Miss Margaret Donnan won the love and respect of all her neighours and friends. Her early training as a nurse in the City of Dublin Hospital qualified her to render skilful and helpful aid in sickness before the establishment of a district nurse to the village, and her wise and sympathetic nature endeared her to every home in the village of Ansborough, Castlewellan. The unusually large attendance of old and young who accompanied the mourners on the long journey from Ansborough to Clough Churchyard on Saturday, 1st March, was revealing testimony to the respect in which she was held, and the eloquent tribute to her character and work at the funeral service in Clough Church by the Presbyterian minister of Ansborough (the Rev. J. Cordner), evoked a sympathetic response in the hearts of all present. We tender our deepest sympathy with the relatives and especially her aged brother Hugh, in their sorrow and bereavement.

Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Belfast.—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
" All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
" Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
" York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

Dublin.—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.

Antrim.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.

Ballee.—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.

Ballycarry.—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.

Ballyclare.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.

Ballyhemlin.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.

Ballymoney.—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.

Banbridge.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Cairncastle.—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m., Rev. Eustace Thompson.

Clough.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m.—Rev. J. Shaw Brown.

Comber.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynne Davies.

Cork.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.

Crumlin.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. G. Price-Jones.

Downpatrick.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

Dromore.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.

Dunmurry.—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 1[illegible] noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.

Glenarm.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

Greyabbey.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Holywood.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.

Killinchy.—Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.

Larne.—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.

Moira.—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

Moneyrea.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.

Newry.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Newtownards.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

Rademon.—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.

Raloo.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.

Templepatrick.—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. Alfred Turner.

Warrenpoint.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details.

Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION

MAY, 1930.

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